

**Opening Statement of Chairman Tom Davis  
Committee on Government Reform  
“BRAC and Beyond: An Examination of the Rationale  
Behind Federal Security Standards for Leased Space”  
July 27, 2005**

Good morning. I would like to welcome everyone to today’s hearing on security standards for Federal leased space.

The federal government owns or leases approximately 3.4 billion square feet of space. As the federal government’s primary property manager, the General Services Administration is responsible for a large percentage of that space, while other agencies, such as DOD, have independent landholding and leasing authorities. These agencies are responsible for ensuring the safety and security of the sites they own and lease. In light of foreign and domestic terrorist attacks against U.S. targets over the past ten years, federal agencies have been at a heightened state of alert. In fact, the threat of terrorist attacks against federal facilities was one of several factors that prompted GAO to include federal property on its January 2003 High-Risk Series. We need to take every possible measure to secure and protect Federal facilities, employees, and visitors.

Immediately following the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the President directed the Department of Justice (DOJ) to assess the vulnerabilities of federal facilities to terrorist attacks and recommend minimum security standards for federally occupied space. The result was the categorization of federal buildings into five levels based on several factors, such as building size, agency mission and function, tenant population, and volume of public access. DOJ also published its *Vulnerability Assessment of Federal Facilities* report in June 1995, which proposed minimum security standards for federal buildings – the first time government-wide security standards were established.

In 1995, the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) was established by executive order and is currently chaired by the Department of Homeland Security. The ISC was tasked with developing and evaluating security standards for Federal facilities and overseeing the implementation of appropriate security measures for those sites. However, these standards were not readily applicable to leased space. So the ISC established a committee to develop its *Security Standards for Leased Space*, which were approved by OMB in September 2004.

Meanwhile, the Department of Defense (DOD) created the Anti-Terrorism Force Protection standards. These standards will apply to new construction and new leased space beginning in October of this year; and beginning in October 2009, they will apply to the rollover of an existing lease. We are here today because it is unclear to many of us why DOD needs its own security standards separate from those developed by the ISC. I am concerned that DOD not only developed leased space criteria that are inconsistent with the ISC standards, but it does not apply them appropriately. For instance, DOD used

its standards to justify seemingly arbitrary recommendations to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission, including a recommendation to vacate a significant percentage of its leased space in the National Capital Region. I understand that other Members of the Committee have similar concerns in their own districts arising from DOD's inconsistent application of its standards. DOD insists that leased space, security standards, and the BRAC recommendations are unrelated issues. Frankly, I disagree and I anticipate we will hear from several Members today who do not share DOD's stovepipe outlook.

Technological advances have led to improvements in the procedures, machines, and devices that can be employed to protect employees and visitors in public buildings, restrict access, or detect intruders. Part of the challenge in securing space comes from the desire to balance critical security needs with cost-efficiency. While certain security technologies, such as x-ray machines, magnetometers, access cards, and biometrics, may help ensure the protection of people and buildings, they may also prove inconvenient or intrusive. Furthermore, none of these measures can be implemented in a leased site without the owner's agreement.

Given the government's reliance on leased space and the unique challenges of securing privately owned sites, the Committee is interested in learning more about the development and implementation of security standards for leased space. Today, we will evaluate the rationale behind the different leased space standards and how they are implemented by agencies. We will hear from Congressman Jim Moran (VA-8) and three agencies that have been actively involved in the development and implementation of security standards for leased space: DHS, GSA, and DOD.